

I am deeply concerned about the state of media control, particularly, television in the United States at this time. The recent decision by Sinclair Broadcasting to force their stations, which reach approximately 1/4 of the viewing public, to air a one-sided anti-Kerry documentary days before the presidential election is a frightening example of the dangers of media consolidation. The broadcast company's related decision to fire its Washington bureau chief for objecting to its directive to broadcast a one-sided program in an attempt to influence the upcoming elections, underscores the fact that there will be no internal debate and self-monitoring with media consolidation. It is incumbent upon the FCC to protect the public's right to a broad range of broadcasting and views and to assure the airways are used in the public interest.

When large companies, such as Sinclair, control the airwaves, the public receives more programming that is perceived by a few as good for their economic and/or personal political interests and less programming that would educate and foster an informed public and robust debate needed to sustain a democracy. To fully participate in an informed manner in our government, the public needs programming relevant to their immediate, local communities and substantive coverage showing different perspectives about issues of both local, national and international concern.

Undoubtedly, Sinclair's actions demonstrate why media ownership rules should be strengthened. No company -- and certainly no handful of individuals controlling a company -- should be allowed to use the public airways to promote their individual political agenda. Even more appalling is the fact that they are not even required to announce during the show their intent.

Thank you for considering these comments in determining the proper license renewal process that will truly protect the public interest.